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**News Release****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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CONTACT:

Wallace I. Renfro

Director of Public Relations

**NCAA BASEBALL RULES COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS NO IMMEDIATE CHANGES
IN EQUIPMENT RULES**

INDIANAPOLIS---There will be no immediate changes in the specifications for manufacturing baseball bats and balls based on recommendations approved today by the NCAA Baseball Rules Committee.

At its annual meeting in Indianapolis, the committee considered recommendations from the NCAA Baseball Research Panel, reviewed results from laboratory testing and performance during the 2000 season, and put forward a set of recommendations that calls for no changes in specifications for the 2001 season.

"We agree with the research panel that the recommendations they made a year ago restored balance between offense and defense in the college game of baseball and made metal bats perform more like wood bats," said Don Kessinger, associate athletics director for internal affairs at the University of Mississippi and chair of the rules committee. "The panel was concerned this year that there may be some loopholes in our testing procedures that we need to address to avoid problems in the future, and we have tried to do that."

Specifically, the committee made the following changes:

- A moment-of-inertia (MOI) standard will be set for each bat length and weight based on bats previously certified by the NCAA Bat Certification Program. All currently certified bats will meet the MOI standard. The MOI of future bats may not be less than the lowest MOI for bats of that length and weight recorded during the certification process for the 2000 season. The committee will continue to monitor the effect of MOI on the integrity of the game. Moment-of-inertia affects how weight is distributed along the barrel of the bat during the swing and can affect performance.
- During the 2001 season, the NCAA will conduct random testing of baseballs for coefficient-of-restitution (COR) compliance. All baseballs used for regular and postseason play must have a COR value of between .525 and .555 to be eligible for play in the 2002 season. The NCAA will collect data to determine if an additional or substitute standard is necessary.
- Effective January 1, 2003, a sliding scale for swing speed based on the bat length will be implemented as part of the NCAA Bat Certification Program. The scale will be based on the original exit speed standard of 97 miles-per-hour for a 34-inch bat.
- The committee supported the Baseball Research Panel recommendations that further study be conducted on the possible effects of bat "workhardening" and that the NCAA collect data to

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determine the accuracy of the NCAA Bat Certification Program testing procedures.

The research panel had recommended a change in the COR for baseballs from .525-.555 to .515-.535. The rules committee voted to certify baseballs for all competition, instead of championship competition only, at the current COR.

"We want to assure that baseballs being used throughout the season are meeting the standard, and we think that is the first important step," Kessinger said. "We may want to make adjustments in the future, but we want to take this one step at a time."

Kessinger said the committee had the same concern about making a change to the MOI. The research panel had recommended creation of a minimum MOI standard for the 2002 season.

"Again, we may want to adjust the MOI in the future, but we want to get another season of competition under our belts with the certified bats we are using today before we do that," Kessinger said. "We agree with the panel regarding a sliding scale for swing speeds during testing, but we want to put that off another two years."

"The bottom line is that two years ago, coaches were calling members of the committee to say that something was wrong and we needed to make some changes in specifications for the bats," he said. "After this season and the changes we saw in the field as a result of the new specifications, those coaches were calling to say they liked how the game was played this year."

According to season statistics in college baseball over the last 20 years, batting averages, scoring and home runs had remained steady until the last five years. From 1981 through 1995, batting averages were steady at .296, home runs at .80 per game, and scoring at 6.49 to 6.52 per game.

From 1995 through 1999, batting averages increased to .301, home runs to .91 per game, and scoring to 6.81 per game. In the just completed 2000 season, following changes to bat specifications, batting averages returned to .297, home runs to .80, and scoring to 6.53.

The Championships Committees in Divisions II and III and the Championships/Competition Cabinet in Division I will consider the rules committee's recommendations when they meet in the fall.

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